The A. F. of L. Weekly News Letter contains a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

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AGITATE! EDUCATE! ORGANIZE!

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MOONEY "FRAME-UP" IS AGAIN EXPOSED

San Francisco, Dec. 15.—Mrs. Alice Kidwell, a principal support for the state against Mooney, Mrs. Mooney, Billings, Nolan and Weinberg, defendants in the preparedness day bomb cases, has confessed that her testimony and her daughter's, is false and that it was "framed" by District Attorney Fickert, his assistants and the police.

She swears that the man she identified as Mooney was not Mooney; that witnesses were offered large sums of money and that other witnesses, dug up from the underworld, were threatened with prosecution if they did not testify as Fickert and the police desired. The conspirators' incentive was a reward of $17,000.

The most sensational part of the Kidwell affidavit is the claim that a dentist, who is a friend of one of Fickert's assistants, conceived the story that the bomb throwers came to his office and hurled the bomb from the roof of his building. The dentist wanted to advertise his business.

The basis of the "frame-up" was the appearance of a woman and a man at the dentist's office the day of the preparedness parade. The women asked to use the ladies' retiring room and the man asked permission to get out on the roof to take some pictures. The prosecution built its case against the five defendants on the theory that the woman was Mrs. Mooney and the man was Warren K. Billings, and that their requests were only an excuse to confer.

Mrs. Kidwell was promised a pardon for her husband, who is serving a term in the penitentiary for forgery. Her daughter, Estelle Smith, who was arrested on murder charges four years ago, was threatened with prosecution for other offenses if she did not play her part, and Louis Rominger, whose conduct along social lines is not above reproach, was threatened with arrest if he did not identify Billings, who has been found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment.

WOMEN CONDUCTORS A BLUFF

Pittsburg, Pa., Dec. 15.—The Pittsburg Railways company's attempt to exploit women by offering them positions as conductors has fallen as flat as the proverbial pancake, says the National Labor Journal.

There have been few applicants for the position of "conductoresses," and they have been mainly of the giddy, notoriety-seeking type of femininity, who think it "just too cute for anything" to have their pictures in the newspapers, says this publication.

Business Agent McGrath of Street Car Men's union No. 85 says all sorts of exaggerations are printed in the daily press, the latest stunt being an appeal for women to act as conductors on trailers. "This company pays the lowest wage of any traction company in America," said McGrath. "Last month 135 men left the service for more congenial employment and higher wages. Men start at 27 cents an hour and average $2.16 a day. They work from five to ten days, without pay, before they are put on a route. A badge, punch, cap and uniform costs them $22.50, and after five years their rate is 35 cents an hour or $2.80 a day."

STAGGERING COAL WASTE.

New York, Dec. 15.—The assertion that 117,000,000 tons of coal, worth $250,000,000 could be saved by the United States every year by efficient management of boiler furnaces, was made by David Moffat Myers in an address before the thirty-eighth annual convention of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. Mr. Myers, in pointing out the advantage of saving fuel, declared that if only half the amount wasted were saved it would release a million freight cars a year for other service which are now employed in hauling coal.

"As a means of far-reaching economy," he said, "the government of the United States should at this time apply intelligent and direct-acting efforts to the conservation of fuel at the industrial plants which are responsible for its greatest consumption. It is unnecessary before a body of engineers to show proof that coal is wasted in vast quantities in the boiler furnaces of our plants."

OBJECT TO STATE POLICE.

Detroit, Dec. 15.—The local federation of labor protests against the governor of this state ordering state constabulary to the plant of the Linderman Steel and Machine company, Muskegon. Machinists employed on war work are on strike for extra pay for overtime, as provided by federal law.

A committee appointed by the federation of labor has investigated the strike and reports that military coercion has been supplied by the governor under the pretext of maintaining law and order when no disorder existed or was threatened.

LABORERS RAISE WAGES.

Albany, N. Y., Dec. 15.—One hundred and fifty locals of the International Hod Carriers, Building and Common Laborers' union have raised wages $3,414,095 during the period between October, 1916, and October, 1917.

These workers might be classed as "unskilled," but they have set an example to higher-grade workers who talk of their "salary," and their "positions," while depending on the employer instead of helping themselves.

CAN'T EVADE TAX LAW.

New York, Dec. 15.—Theatrical managers in this city have abandoned the practice of putting a 10-cent value on seats allotted to critics and guests. As these seats are sold for $2 to other persons, the managers have been saving 19 cents war tax on each seat.

The government has notified the managers that it "will prosecute any person who evades or attempts to evade the law."

OPPOSE CHINESE LABOR.

Tacoma, Wash., Dec. 15.—The executive board of the Washington state federation of labor has recorded its protest "against any and all proposed amendments to existing immigration laws that will admit of any greater freedom for entry of Chinese labor."

The unionists also declare against any attempt to reduce present living standards.

WOMEN SORT SCRAP IRON.

Zanesville, Ohio, Dec. 15.—"Woman's place is the home" means nothing to females who sort scrap iron for the Baltimore and Ohio railroad.

The work is hard and is out in the open, and the railroad has raised wages to [illegible] cents an hour to keep the women from quitting.

WOMEN CONVICTS SOLD FOR 15 CENTS A DAY

Birmingham, Ala., Dec. 15.—Women convicts in this state are sold to contractors for 15 cents day and are housed in filthy stockades while candidates for the governorship talk of the "gradual" removal of this glaring evil, declares the Monthly Bulletin of the Alabama state federation of labor.

This publication says:

"Under a recent date line, Escambia county, state of Alabama, rises to remark that Escambia county has made a most advantageous contract with a certain employing concern, where the county has leased its women convicts for two years for the munificent sum of 15 cents per day. Such things make us wonder if we are still in the dark ages, with all the blind ignorance of human instincts, with all the intolerant cruelty of the old savage slave dealer and buyer, and this happened in the enlightened state of Alabama. Women sold into slavery to the highest bidder, to do whatever that bidder desires; work, slave, toil through the days; rest in stockades, filthy and unfit, for the nights; truly a picture upon which every Alabamian should look with pride; and candidates for the governorship favor the 'gradual' removal of convicted persons from the mines and lumber camps.

"For years and years labor has fought this system of slavery in the state. Governors have promised to abolish it, legislatures have promised to abolish it; the people have demanded its abolishment, but when it comes to weighing the human soul against the almighty dollar, the dollar wins every time. Poor, indeed, must be that state which has to sell its legal slaves into involuntary servitude that it may use the revenue thus obtained to pay its teachers, to pay it officers, to pay its expenses in other ways, to pay the jurors who send the unfortunates to the mines; to pay the judges who pronounce sentence.

"And not a man offers for office in the state but who will wink at this inhuman traffic in human souls; not one of them will come out flatly for the abolition of this traffic."

CONVICTS FOR WAR WORK.

Washington, Dec. 15.—Senator Smith, of Georgia, has introduced a bill providing for the use of convicts on war work. The plan is an extension of the state use system in certain states, which employ convicts on goods used by the state instead of contracting them to private employers.

To protect state convict labor laws Senator Smith's proposal provides that these goods shall be subject to such laws upon arrival and delivery in such state.

The plan shall be effective only where private concerns cannot furnish supplies, and goods will be sold at the prevailing market rates. Wages and hours of the prisoners shall be based upon the standard hours and wages prevailing in the vicinity in which the institution is located, and the cost of maintaining the prisoner shall be deducted from his compensation.

Prisoners in any federal, state, county or other penal institution are included in the act, and the secretary of the navy and the secretary of war are empowered to establish in government prisons and disciplinary barracks factories for the manufacture of government supplies.

SELF DENIAL URGED.

Washington, Dec. 15.—In urging the purchase of war certificates Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo jars those people who imagine the war will bring no change in their happy-go-lucky method of living.

"The wide spread practice of economy is absolutely vital to the success of the war," says the cabinet official.

"This war can not be financed unless the American people immediately stop waste, practice self denial, economize in every possible direction and lend the money they save thereby to the government."

OHIO ACCIDENTS INCREASE.

Columbus, Ohio, Dec. 15.—The state industrial commission reports that there were 185,223 accidents in Ohio this year, against 166,000 the year before.

The rush of work has resulted in many applications from employers for permission to get around laws limiting the hours of female labor. These requests have been especially numerous since the new law, further restricting the employment of female labor, went into effect. These requests, the commission says, have generally been denied.

FORD MUST DIVIDE PROFITS.

Detroit, Dec. 15.—The Ford Motor company has been ordered to declare a dividend of $19,275,385 as a result of a suit started by stockholders.

It has been suggested that Ford now declare for a $10-a-day wage, and use up his future surplus, as the court orders that hereafter the Ford Motor company shall not accumulate profits "in excess of such as may be reasonably required in the conduct of the business."

JANITORS RAISE WAGES.

San Francisco, Dec. 15.—Theater managers have accepted the new wage scale of the Janitors' union. These workers are now paid $3.50 for an eight-hour day. The finance committee of the city's board of supervisors has recommended $100 a month for civil service janitors and the proposal is now before the mayor for approval.

REJECT NON-UNION SHOP.

Springfield, Ill., Dec. 15.—By a referendum vote of eleven to one the Brotherhood of Electrical Workers has rejected a proposition submitted by the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph company that wages be raised and the non-union shop recognized.

Later President Wilson's mediation commission assisted in an adjustment of this dispute.

UNIONIST DISMISSED.

Louisville, Ky., Dec. 15.—Peter Campbell, secretary of the Kentucky state federation of labor, has been dismissed from the city fire department by the board of public safety because he organized a union of firemen. The trial was secret and Campbell was denied the right to have a record taken of the proceedings.

BARBERS RAISE WAGES.

Portland, Ore., Dec. 15.—The Barbers' union has secured a new union shop agreement with the Master Barbers' association.

The new wage scale provides for $[illegible] a week minimum with [illegible] per cent over $[illegible]. The work day will be [illegible] hours with [illegible] hours on Saturday.

U. S. SUPREME COURT PROTECTS NON-UNION SHOP

Washington, Dec. 15.—The United States supreme court has ruled that where an employer opposes trade unionism, and employes accept work under those conditions, it is unlawful to attempt to unionize the plant or solicit its employes to join a union.

The above is the "meat" of a decision made in the case of the Hitchmen Coal and Coke company of West Virginia versus the United Mine Workers. Several years ago an injunction was issued against the miners by Judge Dayton, at the request of the company. The case was appealed to the federal court of appeals, sitting in Richmond, Va., and in May, 1914, that tribunal reversed the injunction on the ground that members of the United Mine Workers have the right to urge the company's employes to join their union.

The case has been pending before the United States supreme court since that time. Now the court of appeals is reversed.

The court says that when workers entered into employment with the coal company, with the understanding that the mines should be conducted on the non-union plan, the company must be protected. The fact that this working agreement established between the company and its non-unionists could be broken at any time, and the fact that the non-unionists had the right to quit at any time, makes no difference. The United Mine Workers could not solicit individuals to join the union as these workers, if they voted to suspend work as trade unionists, might force the company to change conditions.

The court makes this contribution to economic literature:

"What the defendants were endeavoring to do at the Hitchman mines and neighboring mines was not a bona fide effort to enlarge the membership of the union, since the new members were not desired or sought except as a means to the end of compelling the owners of the mines to change their methods of operation."

The court also declares that it is erroneous to assume that all measures which may be resorted to in the effort to unionize a mine are lawful if they are peaceful—that is, if they stop short of physical violence or coercion through fear of it; the court holding that any violation of plaintiff's legal rights contrived by defendants for the purpose of inflicting damage, or having that as its necessary effect, is as plainly contrary to law as if it involved a breach of the peace, and that a combination to procure concerted breaches of contract by plaintiff's employes constituted such a violation, the Clayton law to the contrary notwithstanding.

Summing up the matter the court holds that the purpose of defendants to bring about a strike at the mine in order to compel plaintiff, through fear of financial loss, to consent to the unionization of the mines as the lesser evil, was an unlawful purpose and that the methods resorted to by the organizer—the inducing of employes to unite with the union in an effort to subvert the system of employment at the mines by concerted breaches of the contract of employment known to be in force there—were unlawful and malicious methods, and not to be justified as a fair exercise of the right to increase the membership of the union.

The contract the court refers to was explained in an earlier part of the decision as simply an agreement to work in these non-union properties, and could be broken at will by either employer or employed.

The court took the same position in the case of the Eagle Glass company, of Wellsburg, W. Va., against the American Flint Glass Workers' union. This concern secured an injunction from Judge Dayton on July 28, 1913, prohibiting the glass workers from attempting to unionize the plant. The Richmond, Va., federal court of appeals set the decision aside, as it did in the Hitchman case, and on the company's appeal to the United States supreme court Judge Dayton is sustained.

In a public statement on the court's decision in the Hitchman case, President Gompers said:

"In its position the Hitchman Coal and Coke company did not have the temerity to claim that there was any violence or unlawful conduct on the part of the representatives of the union to organize the coal miners. No cognizance seems to have been taken of the fact that in the petition for the injunction the Hitchman company declared 'that the company would not allow any union,' and that 'no union man could remain in the employ of the company.'

"The scale of wages paid the miners in many of the mines of West Virginia is far below that prevailing in the entire competitive field, and the Hitchman company pays the lowest of them all, and yet in its petition the company said that the Miners' union aimed to have that company 'pay such scale of wages as said United Mine Workers of America arbitrarily fixed.'

"When the Clayton law was enacted a fact was declared, not merely for future guidance of the courts, but one founded upon the fundamental principle 'That the labor of a human being is not a commodity or article of commerce.' The declaration of that principle should certainly have had some weight with the court in determining whether a voluntary association of workers, organized not for profit, but for their personal protection, should not have been held as a conspiracy in its relations with a corporation or company which assumed a sort of proprietary right in the labor of workers as if that labor and labor power were a commodity or commerce.

"At the time when the injunction was issued John Mitchell was president and William B. Wilson secretary-treasurer of the United Mine Workers. The former is now food administrator of the state of New York. The latter is a member of the president's cabinet. And these men, with others of equal standing and character, are stigmatized by the court as conspirators. Terms of opprobrium, no matter by whom, will not deter right-thinking men from looking with favor upon the unselfish, humane, and patriotic work performed by the organized workers of America."

MUCH LABOR POWER WASTED.

Allentown, Pa., Dec. 15.—The Labor Herald says many workers come into its office and complain against conditions in the Bethlehem Steel company, located a few miles from this city.

It is stated that thousands of men leave the company because of petty persecutions.

"Labor turn over is one very great cause for lack of efficiency. Any big industry that annually lets more men walk out of its employ than it has employed at any certain time, is not being conducted efficiently and is causing a great waste of labor and a dead loss to society," says the Labor Herald.

"The Bethlehem Steel company has a great newspaper reputation for efficiency, but men employed there claim that it is only newspaper reputation. In reality, these employes say, a vast waste of labor power goes on in that plant because the men feel so bitterly toward the management. This is mostly due to the persecutions of the under foremen.

"Before the government allows this company to employ girls in its machine shops something should be done to prevent the driving away of skilled men.

"This community is suffering a loss every time a man leaves the Bethlehem Steel company's employ and goes to another town. It is vain for the government to seek to obtain men for the Bethlehem Steel company while the company, with its methods drives the men away in such numbers."

DON'T STRIKE TOO QUICKLY.

Springfield, Ill., Dec. 15.—Under the above caption the Journal of the Electrical Workers, official magazine of the Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, gives this advice:

"Do not be too hasty to strike; you may find it much harder to get a satisfactory settlement than it was to quit work.

"Today is the day of conciliation and arbitration; there is plenty of time to strike after they fail. Strikes should only be called as a last resort and only then in strict accordance with our laws."

WOULD CONSCRIPT WEALTH.

Middletown, Ohio, Dec. 15.—Conscription of wealth was favored by Charles A. Hinch, in an address before the Ohio State Bankers' association.

"The government would be right," he said, "in conscripting every bit of capital in this country necessary to win the war. When the government has the right to conscript young men to the army, often requiring the young man to give up his life, there is no one who can deny its right to take the property necessary to carry the war to a successful conclusion."

TEACHERS' PAY RAISED.

Boston, Dec. 15.—Public school officials announce that the appropriation estimates for the coming year will include increases of $96 for elementary teachers and $120 for principals and sub-principals.

STATE SPEED LAWS GOVERN.

Madison, Wis., Dec. 15.—The state supreme court has ruled that state laws govern rather than local police ordinances in the matter of regulating the speed of automobiles.

SHORTEN WORK DAY.

Baltimore, Dec. 15.—Charles Zies & Sons have signed an agreement with Machinists' union No. 405 whereby these employes will received a half-day off from June to September.

VOCATIONAL PLAN GROWS.

Washington, Dec. 15.—"The war had, so to speak, found the United States vocationally unprepared," says the federal board for vocational education in its first report to congress.

This board is empowered, under an act by the last congress, to work with states in developing an educational system in industries, in agriculture and in home economics. In a few words, the purpose of this legislation is, to develop skilled workers. The government appropriates one dollar to a state for every dollar the state sets aside for this purpose. To date the law has been accepted by 46 of the 48 states.

"By far the most important event of the 12 months just passed in vocational education," declares the report, "was the passage of the Smith-Hughes act. This event has marked the beginning of a new era in vocational education in the United States. From now on vocational education is a matter to which the energies of both state and federal governments will be directed. Its establishment means much for the defense as well as for the prosperity of the people of the country. It means an immediate extension of our secondary public school system so as to furnish practical education for the wage-earning employments. It means, furthermore, that this extension will be carefully planned and ordered. It means an end to haphazard extension of vocational education. It means that a program can be agreed upon and can be developed progressively from year to year."

THERE ARE NO "SHORT CUTS."

Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, Dec. 15.—Because of the fairness of Justice Higgins, president of the commonwealth arbitration court, and the antagonism of the New South Wales government to organized labor, some workers urge that the state industrial laws be ignored and that unions register under the commonwealth act.

The Australian Worker does not approve of this "short cut" plan. The editor says:

"Unfortunately the suggestion collides with the probability that any such move would result in Justice Higgins being jockeyed out of his job or in the arbitration laws be so altered that he would be shorn of his present powers."

FOOD BY WEIGHT.

Harrisburg, Pa., Dec. 15.—Food sold by weight is favored by James Sweeney, chief of the state bureau of weights and measures.

Under the present law, he says, the purchaser is required to pay for material used in wrapping. This material is utterly valueless to him.

"The practice of giving short weight and measure, when persisted in, whether willfully or otherwise, is a crime and the laws should deal with the practice that the consumer may be protected. Faulty scales or measures in these days are no excuse," says this state official.

NO LABOR SHORTAGE IN N. Y.

Albany, N. Y., Dec. 15.—In spite of all reports about a labor shortage it will take another heavy military draft to materially affect the labor power of the state, says a report of the state industrial commission.

IRON MOLDERS WANT MORE.

Cleveland, Dec. 15.—Iron Molders' union No. 218 has adopted a new wage scale, to take effect the first of the year. Present rates of $4.50 for a nine-hour day are changed to read "$6 for an eight-hour day."

FAVOR HEALTH INSURANCE.

Trenton, N. J., Dec. 15.—Universal health insurance for wage earners as an immediate war time necessity for strengthening the vitality of this country's population is recommended in a report of a state commission appointed to investigate social insurance problems in New Jersey. The report says:

"The stress of industry in war is making increasing demands upon physical endurance. In our hour of necessity we have been shocked by the high percentage of draft rejections on account of physical disability. As never before we need now to conserve, for present and future generations, the health and physical vigor of our people. Furthermore, it is the duty of statesmanship to look beyond our immediate pressing needs to the period of reconstruction at the close of the war. We cannot afford to disregard the protective legislative inducements already offered to workmen by our keenest commercial competitors in Europe.

"To minimize the financial stress attending sickness the system should provide a cash benefit during temporary incapacity for work. It should also provide maternity care to meet the special needs of working mothers. Health insurance should be democratically supported and managed by those directly concerned, the state bearing as its share the cost of general administration, as it does in workmen's compensation."

FIRST AID TAUGHT MINERS.

Washington, Dec. 15.—In its annual report the federal bureau of mines says that more than 4,800 miners in 23 states were trained in mine rescue and first-aid work during the past year. The total number trained by the bureau since its organization is 46,873.

The bureau, it is stated, has no police powers such as are given to mining departments in other countries; consequently it seeks to advance its purpose by co-operating with all agencies working for the same ends, and welcomes the aid of all organizations, officials and individuals to establish safer devices and methods in mining and in the enforcement and enactment of better mining laws.

WHAT UNIONISM CAN DO.

Baltimore, Dec. 15.—While employers spend money without stint in anti-union campaigns, recent gains by the Dock Builders and Pile Drivers' union show, in a few words, why unionism is opposed.

Less than two years ago a handful of these workers united. They were working 10 hours a day. They strengthened their union and now they are working an eight-hour day for 50 cents an hour.

A greater gain, however, is the spirit of independence and a voice in working conditions.

STRIKE FOR EIGHT HOURS.

New Bedford, Mass., Dec. 15.—Because the Morse Twist Drill company refused its workers an eight-hour day it is confronted by a strike of 800 machinists and other skilled employes.

When the men suspended work they were notified that if they didn't hurry back they'd lose their jobs, but the strikers ignored the threat.

TEXAS WAITERS STRIKE.

Denison, Tex., Dec. 15.—Waiters and waitresses have suspended work to enforce a nine-hour day and $6 a week against a work day of from 12 to 16 hours for $4 a week

NO ABSOLUTE FREEDOM.

Washington, Dec. 15.—"There is no absolute freedom in civilized societies" is one of the statements in the government's defense of the conscription law, which is now before the United States supreme court on a constitutionality test.

"Illustrations may be cited without number to show that in order to protect the liberties of the people as a whole the individual citizen may incidentally or temporarily be restrained of his liberties," it is stated.

The brief characterizes as "unfounded" the contention that compulsory military service is contrary to the spirit of democracy, and says that while occasions for the draft in the country have been infrequent, "it has been resorted to without flinching when the emergency arose."

"It has long been settled under our scheme of constitutional government and the statutes that the power resides in only one person to decide when the emergency arises which justifies the calling out of the militia. That person is the commander-in-chief, the president. It is not even for the governor of the state, much less a private militia man, to say that the president has wrongly decided.

"The president, of course, should be scrupulously careful not to exceed the bounds of constitutional authority. But the matter is solely within his discretion, and from a decision made in exercise thereof no appeal lies in the courts. Correction for possible abuse is in the power of impeachment and frequent elections."

The government asserts that power conferred upon congress to declare war carries with it authority to compel military service, either at home or abroad.

EXTEND STATE USE PLAN.

Trenton, N. J., Dec. 15.—The state-use system in New Jersey is replacing the old plan of contracting for the labor of convicts, according to the annual report of the state labor commission. Under this plan the commission supervises all work performed by inmates of New Jersey penal institutions, and allots the work to be done by the convicts, which is for the state.

The manufacture of automobile tags for the motor vehicle department will be started and will represent a saving over former methods or having the work done by private contractors who ignore the prisoners' welfare.

ATTACK ANTI-FOOD SAVERS.

Washington, Dec. 15.—Herbert C. Hoover has answered the claim of members of the Illinois Live Stock association that there is no necessity for "meatless" and "wheatless" days.

The food administrator charges that these persons are "endeavoring to raise the price of meat" and that such actions "are comparable to opposition to the draft."

"No more foolish or unpatriotic utterance has been made than the statement referred to," he says.

FIREMEN WIN EIGHT HOURS.

New Bedford, Mass., Dec. 15.—The eight-hour day is being established in cotton yarn mills by Stationary Firemen's union No. 294. Several large corporations granted the demand after a short strike and the Cotton Manufacturers' association now favors arbitration.

CUTTERS INCREASE RATES.

Cincinnati, Dec. 15.—Clothing Cutters and Trimmers' union No. 100 has raised wages $2 a week. These workers are affiliated with the United Garment Workers.

Postal Chief Opposes A. F. of L. Post Office Unions

Washington, Dec. 15.—"Post office unions affiliated to the A. F. of L. are a menace and should be abolished," is Postmaster General Burleson's answer to organized labor's demand that working conditions in this branch of the government be improved.

Contrary to the policy of the war, navy and other departments, the post office refuses to recognize bona fide trade unions or the complaints of these workers' representatives. As a result complaints have multiplied and at the A. F. of L. convention, last month, Postmaster General Burleson's autocratic policy was condemned and the executive council of the A. F. of L. was instructed to co-operate with the postal organizations in presenting President Wilson "all the facts concerning the oppressive labor policy of Postmaster General Burleson."

Now Postmaster General Burleson declares for war, and in his annual report to congress asks for legislation that will make these unions mere hand-shaking outfits, with Mr. Burleson the custodian of all protests.

He refers to the A. F. of L. as "an outside organization" which has, for several years, been attempting to unionize government employes, and that "the advisability of permitting government employes to use the strike and boycott is seriously questioned."

In answer to this attack, President Gompers, in a public statement, said:

"Mr. Burleson cannot point to a single instance where an affiliated organization of postal employes has threatened to strike. He cannot name a single officer of these organizations who has remotely suggested such a course. Personally, in the many times I have addressed postal employes in all parts of the country, I have explained to them that legislation and not the strike was their weapon of last resort.

"I can see no danger of a strike of postal employes if they have free access to congress and public opinion to secure correction of their grievances. But I can conceive of serious trouble arising if the Burleson idea of repressing men and not giving them the opportunity to organize and to come in contact with their fellow workers in a sincere desire to make better the lot of all groups of workers is put into operation.

"To deny the right of workers in our largest governmental agency to organize is to make a mockery of our faith in democracy. If autocracy is harmful to the morals of our alien enemies abroad, then let us not introduce a species of it into our largest federal institution by attempting [illegible] the [illegible] of postal workers.

"The A. F. of L. stands prepared today to back up its position of 1906, when it fought for the rights of the government employe. We differ from Mr. Burleson in his view that the anti-gag law has operated to build up organizations of employes that are a menace. We fear that the menace lies, not in the employes' organizations, but in the denial to citizens of fundamental rights."

Thos. F. Flaherty, secretary-treasurer of the National Federation of Postal Employes, replies to Mr. Burleson in vigorous fashion and challenges the postmaster general to cite one instance where a strike of postal employes has been threatened.

"If the postal employes were not strike proof they would have long ago resented the repeated invasion of their rights by Mr. Burleson in his autocratic disregard of the existence of a human element in the service," is one of Flaherty's hot counters on the postal chief.

"If affiliation with the A. F. of L. is the menace that Mr. Burleson pictures," continues this unionist, "then he is largely responsible for this menace. It is a significant fact that more postal employes have joined the A. F. of L. in the past year of Mr. Burleson's administration than in all the preceding years since Benjamin Franklin established our postal service, [illegible] years ago. City carriers, railway mail clerks, post office clerks and even rural carriers are clamoring to join the labor movement. And why? Because they realize, after four and a half years of a Burlesonized service, that they must have some strong influence to offset the repeated encroachments upon their rights as citizens and wage earners. He views the service as a money grubbing institution and the employes merely as instrumentalities to pile up a larger money surplus.

"He personally lobbied against their small wage increase at the last session of congress and succeeded in excluding his employes from the raises the congress voted to other government workers. And now because the employes have the temerity to suggest that their decade-old wage standard is inadequate he reminds them that they are getting three times the wage of soldiers in the trenches.

"Mr. Burleson wants the congress to repeal the legislation granting employes the right to petition congress directly. It is a known fact that he is almost daily at the capitol in behalf of legislation in which the administration is interested. He would deny to the humble letter carriers and postal clerks the right he so freely exercises himself."

U. S. SUPREME COURT WEAKENS LABOR LAW

San Francisco, Dec. 15.—H. W. Hutton, attorney-at-law, and authority on marine law, has analyzed the recent decision of the United States supreme court that seamen are not laborers under the federal contract labor law.

Attorney Hutton reaches this conclusion, which is published in the Coast Seamen's Journal:

"It seems quite clear that there is now little but the name left of a law that on its face was passed to exclude every person, class or calling, except actors, artists, lecturers, singers, ministers, professors for colleges or seminaries, persons belonging to any recognized learned profession, and domestic servants."

The court's decision was made in a suit started by Paul Scharrenberg, secretary of the California state federation of labor, and member of the Seamen's union, for penalties against the Dollar Steamship company, which was charged with having brought 19 Chinese to this country on a British ship for service on American ships. The court dismissed the plea on the ground that seamen are not laborers; that the Chinese were "not brought into this country," and that an American ship in foreign commerce is not a part of the territory of the United States in the sense that men employed on it can be said to be laboring "in the United States" or "performing labor in this country."

In reply to the latter portion of the decision, Attorney Hutton says:

"It has been generally supposed that the deck of an American vessel is at least a place 'subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.' We are engaged in a great conflict based partly upon that proposition."

TO CONDEMN DON'T SOLVE.

New York, Dec. 15.—Contractors doing the work of clothing cutters is one of the problems confronting members of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' union.

The official bulletin of local No. 10 of this organization says one may use every possible means to put the contractor out of busines, but he will not succeed.

"We know," says this publication, "what the ultimate result is—they are not forced out of business, they become an incorporated firm—and the union cannot lay its hands on them.

"The question is not, 'is day work constitutional?' but, 'is hunger constitutional?' We condemn the evils borne of sub-factories—we condemn cutters for working day work in such shops, and we complacently rub our hands, feeling satisfied that we have performed our duty—disregarding the fact that only the result of the evil was condemned—but the evil itself is permitted to flourish.

"We must meet all issues squarely. Dodging them will not solve them. We have condemned, fined and sometimes suspended men for these violations—but many bosses still do the work of cutters."

COPPER BARONS BREAK WORD

Phoenix, Ariz., Dec. 15.—The Arizona Labor Journal says the copper companies in the Globe-Miami district, with one exception, have failed to live up to any part of the agreement put into effect by President Wilson's mediation commission.

"There are hundreds of men idle in the district. The Inspiration company, at the last checking, had in its employ 442 men, against about 1,500 during normal times," says this paper.

The so-called "Loyalty" league is again working with the copper barons and it is impossible for a miner to secure employment unless he is a member of that copper-controlled organization.

Applicants for work are first asked: "Are you a member of the 'Loyalty' league?" If not, the worker is told to sign an application blank. A known unionist is transferred to Miami, if he lives in Globe, and vice versa, in the hope that transportation expenses will discourage him and cause him to quit his employment.

LET SEAMEN GO TO SEA.

New York, Dec. 15.—The objection of marine unions to the government's policy of conscripting skilled seamen for the army is indorsed by the New York Times, which says that "men as well as officers of steam and sailing vessels will be indispensable to the navigation of the shipping board's fleet."

"Crews must be found for the mobilized American merchant marine, and an effort should be made to sift out from the camps seamen who can be of more service on the decks of ships than in the armies of the United States. Some of them have been captains and mates, and other engineers. To send them to the trenches would be a poor use of good sea material. Technicalities should be swept aside and red tape cut to reclaim the trained sailors and turn them over to the merchant marine. It is not too late."

CAR MEN WANT MORE.

Toledo, Ohio, Dec. 15.—The local street car company is negotiating with its organized motormen and conductors on a proposed wage increase of 10 cents an hour. This situation is different from the days when officers of the Amalgamated Association of Street Car Men were slugged on the public streets when they attempted to interest Toledo street car employes in trade unionism. Among the men assaulted were President Mahon and the late Resin Orr, treasurer.

WAGES STILL TOO LOW.

Boston, Dec. 15.—The editor of the Boston Globe says food prices have soared without warrant and that the cost of bare existence has become so great as to cause real suffering.

He makes this reference to so-called high wages:

"Bound up with the labor difficulties of the country is the problem of making even increased wages meet the requirements of a working man's table."

SILVER WORKERS UNITE.

New Haven, Conn., Dec. 15.—Silver workers have organized under direct jurisdiction of the A. F. of L.

At the last convention of the Metal Polishers, Buffers, Brass and Silver Workers' Union of North America, it was voted to relinquish jurisdiction over the silver workers. Beginning with the first of the year this international organization will be known as the Metal Polishers' International union.

WIRE MEN WANT MORE.

San Antonio, Tex., Dec. 15.—The Electrical Workers' union has presented a new wage scale, which raises wages [illegible] cents an hour.

"Labor-to-Blame" Critics Should Read U. S. Reports

Washington, Dec. 15.—The federal bureau of labor statistics reports that union wages in 101 of the principal trades in 48 leading cities of the United States were 19 per cent higher in May, 1916, than in 1907. This report has just been issued in bulletin No. 214.

The same department of the government reported last October in its Monthly Review:

"Comparing prices the year before the war with prices in August, 1917, food as a whole advanced 47 per cent. Flour advanced 130 per cent, or more than two and one-fourth times the price in August, 1913; cornmeal advanced 120 per cent, or nearly as much as flour; potatoes, 87 per cent; sugar, 77 per cent; lard, 72 per cent, and pork chops, 58 per cent."

Despite these figures, issued by the government, there are editors and other citizens who tell the people that trade unions are responsible for present living costs.

R. R. AGE LIMIT IS WRONG.

Cleveland, Dec. 15.—Writing in the Locomotive Engineers' Journal, a correspondent has this to say of the age limit on railroads:

"The railroads tell the public the age limit is the result of their desire to make railroading and railroad travel safer by requiring physical fitness of the men employed in train work, while the fact is, the service today, largely through want of skilled men, is much more dangerous than it should be with all the mechanical safety appliances surrounding it. Not only is the age limit unfair, but there is the physical test which often puts men out of service when they are still fit.

"The round house, the shops or the yards are not fit places for women to work, whether they are young or old, and if the thing is permitted to continue it will merely have the effect of lowering wages for the class of work they are engaged in. If the age limit affected others than men in train service, it would look like a fair proposition at least, but it only hits the men in train work as a rule, and that's where the unfairness of it comes in. We all know that inexperience has caused more wrecks, ten times over, than could be charged to any and all the physical defects of experienced men who have passed the age limit."

TEAMSTERS RAISE WAGES.

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, Dec. 15.—After a few hours' strike the Teamsters' union secured a union-shop agreement which provides for a nine and one-half hour work day and wage increases of 15 to 20 per cent. These standards will become general, as the agreement is signed by the General Cartage association.

Chicago, Dec. 15.—Commission Wagon Drivers' union No. 702 has raised wages $2.50 a week, after a two-days' strike.

Cincinnati, Dec. 15.—Following conferences with employers, organized milk drivers have increased wages $2 a week. These workers are affiliated with the Brotherhood of Teamsters, and were assisted by officers of that organization.

Newark, N. J., Dec. 15.—Milk drivers to the number of 200 have organized and are chartered by the Brotherhood of Teamsters.

BREWERY WORKERS GAIN.

Cincinnati, Dec. 15.—In a report covering three years of progress officers of the International Union of United Brewery Workmen show that during this period wages have been increased $10,593,820 and the working time reduced 4,586,322 hours. These gains were obtained through the signing of 628 contracts for 579 unions located in 447 cities and affect 51,885 members.

In addition to the above, contracts were signed by 102 unions, representing 6,259 members. These unions failed to make proper reports to headquarters.

Membership gains during the three years are as follows: 1914, 2,933; 1915, 4,820; 1916, 6,004. Total, 13,757.

STREET CAR MEN STRIKE.

Charleston, W. Va., Dec. 15.—A refusal of the Charleston Interurban Railway company to treat with a committee representing the Street Car Men's union has resulted in a strike.

Although the system is practically tied up the manager told reporters that he knew nothing of a strike. "I haven't heard anything but rumors," he said.

The strikers are demanding a living wage.

WANTS CHINKS LOOKED INTO.

Washington, Dec. 15.—United States Senator Gallinger has introduced a resolution empowering the committee on agriculture and forestry to "make careful investigation into the advisability of recommending legislation that will permit the importation of Chinese farmers into the United States under proper restrictions and regulations, during the continuance of the war."

RAILWAY CLERKS WIN.

Richmond, Va., Dec. 15.—Clerks employed by the Atlantic Coast Line railroad system have won their six-weeks' strike and returned to work.

The management agrees not to interfere with employes if they desire to join the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks or any other organization.

SHOP MEN RAISE WAGES.

Cumberland, Md., Dec. 15.—Federated shop men employed on the Western Maryland railroad have received wage increases the last few months that total [illegible] cents an hour. The rate is now [illegible] cents for boiler makers, machinists and blacksmiths. These workers are 100 per cent organized.

MATTRESS MAKERS WIN.

Newark, N. J., Dec. 15.—The members of Mattress Makers' union No. [illegible] have won all their demands for improved working conditions after a [illegible] strike.